growth in public debt through a policy of fiscal rectitude, recourse to sources of lower cost borrowings, debt restructuring measures, pursuing appropriate tax policies that result in higher tax: GDP ratio, in order to facilitate the process of fiscal consolidation.

Proposal to raise home loan ceiling

4234. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government proposes to raise the home loan ceiling;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has also lately felt that the present ceiling is not enough; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The Government does not prescribe any ceiling on home loans. However, according to the RBI guidelines, there is a limit on loans for housing at Rs. 20 lakh for priority sector lending. Furthermore, the Government of India had formulated a scheme known as the Differential Rate of Interest (DRI) Scheme in March 1972 for extending financial assistance at concessional rate of interest at 4 per cent to selected low income groups .

At the behest of the Government the limit of housing loan under the DRI Scheme was raised from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 20,000/- per beneficiary *w.e.f.* June 13, 2007 by the RBI.

Proposal for new Taxes

4235. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to introduce new taxes in Budget 2008-09 which will burden aam admi especially the salaried class;

(b) whether Government will keep in mind the prices of essential items have almost doubled before introducing new taxes; and

(c) if so, how Government proposes to react to the above situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The Union Budget 2008-09, has rationalized the personal income-tax rate structure to provide substantial relief to the aam admi, especially the salaried class. The tax relief so provided will, to a large extent, provide protection against rising prices to such tax-payers. Further, there is no proposal to introduce any new taxes which will burden such persons.

Investor-Friendly Environment

4236. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has blamed the State Governments for not providing an investor-friendly environment to private companies like ITC and Bharati Enterprises;

(b) whether India has framed a clear roadmap to boost private investment and strengthen rural areas but some State Governments have not been very supportive in providing investor-